

VZCZCXYZ0006
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHJM #0585 0901438
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 311438Z MAR 09
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4524

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 000585

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [KPAO](#)

SUBJECT: INL Assistant Secretary Johnson's Meetings in the West Bank

¶1. (U) Summary. INL Assistant Secretary Johnson's March 15 visit to the West Bank gave him an opportunity to underscore U.S. support for Palestinian security forces training programs. He visited Palestinian security sector reform projects funded by INL, attended the opening of the new Presidential Guard (PG) training facility, and met with Minister of Interior Yahya and Strategic Planning Department (SPD) Director Jibrini. End summary.

Underscoring U.S. support for PSF training

¶2. (U) INL Assistant Secretary Johnson and Consul General Walles participated with Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Fayyad in the opening of the PG's new Jericho Training Center (JTC). Other prominent guests included Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erekat, the heads of other PA security forces (PASF), and a senior delegation from Jordan's Public Security Directorate.

¶3. (U) The JTC, built with INL funds and under INL oversight, is a modern facility with a capacity of 700 trainees -- the first to be built with U.S. funds that were allocated to support the security capability of the PA government. The PG itself was the first PA security force to be trained at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC).

¶4. (U) INL-funded training and equipping of PG and National Security Force (NSF) battalions is part of the Palestinian security sector reform program, implemented in coordination with the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC), as is the construction of garrison and training camps for those forces. The SPD, intended to build planning and coordination capacity for the Ministry of Interior, is also an INL/USSC project.

¶5. (U) Johnson also visited two NSF camps in Jericho. One, an NSF operations camp, is currently under construction; the other, an NSF training camp, will break ground in April. These camps, the first of several to be built for the NSF, will be completed later in 2009 and will serve as garrisons for NSF police-support units being trained at JIPTC.

Meetings with Yahya and Jibrini

¶6. (SBU) In Ramallah, Johnson called on Minister of Interior Yahya, who expressed his appreciation for assistance the USG is providing PASF, and noted their improved performance since 2007. He explained how he is working on a general security reorganization that will result in better coordination among the PASF services. Yahya commented specifically on the need to improve the capabilities of the Civil Defense, such as fire, rescue, and other first responders, to undertake roles such as managing evacuations and manning shelters.

¶7. (SBU) In a separate meeting, SPD Director Jibrini highlighted the difficulties of tracking foreign assistance to the PASF, and explained his plans to set up a project registration process within the MOI to overcome this problem.

Media coverage

¶8. (U) The dedication ceremony received extensive and favorable coverage in the Palestinian press, including front-page articles and photographs of PM Fayyad addressing the assembled PG units and guests, and of A/S Johnson and Fayyad cutting the ribbon to formally open the camp.

¶9. (U) A/S Johnson has cleared this cable.

WALLES